

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8895
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBAGXABEIRUT
USINT CAIRO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 5061

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IS
SUBJECT: EBAN' S CURRENT ESTIMATE OF MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

SUMMARY. AFTER CHARGE' S JUNE 25 BRIEFING ON AGREEMENT ON PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR, FONMIN EBAN SAID HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT SUMMIT HAD CONCLUDED WITH US AND USSR AGREEING TO DISAGREE ON MIDDLE EAST. FONMIN, COMMENTING ON BOURGUIBA FEELER RE MEETING WITH ISRAELIS, SAID THAT ISRAEL WAS CONCERNED AT PRESENT ABOUT ITS IMAGE BUT THIS IS NOT TO SAY ISRAEL IS HESITANT ABOUT MEETING

EBAN ADDED THAT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL IF US WERE TO DEMONSTRATE ITS INTEREST IN MEETING TO TUNISIANS IN NORMAL COURSE OF DIPLOMATIC CONTACT. EBAN TURNED TO RECENT EGYPTIAN TALK ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS AND SAID THIS RESULTED FROM FRUSTRATION WITH UNSC DEBATE AND WAS NOTHING MORE THAN LIP SERVICE. ZAYYAT HAD POSED CONDITIONS HE KNEW ISRAEL COULD NOT ACCEPT. IN THIS REGARD EBAN EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN ABOUT REGRESSION IN ARAB PUBLIC POSITION. WHEREAS EGYPTIANS HAD ONCE DEMANDED ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO PRE-1967 LINES,
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THEY WERE NOW TALKING ABOUT 1947 PARTITION PLAN BORDERS IN POSING PRE- CONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL. EBAN FELT THAT SADAT IS DISCOURAGED WITH SUMMIT RESULTS AND WITH FIRST PART OF UNSC DEBATE. HE SAID THAT UNSYG HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN VISITING MIDDLE EAST CAPITALS AND ISRAEL WAS INCLINED TO AGREE PROVIDED HE CAME AS SYG AND NOT TIED TO ANY UN RESOLUTION. SYG TOUR IN LATE JULY OR AUGUST COULD GIVE SADAT AN OUT AND MIGHT RESULT IN INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OR CURTAILMENT OF UNSC DEBATE. IN ANY EVENT, EBAN SAID, ISRAEL IS OPPOSED TO CHANGING VENUE OF MEETING TO GENEVA. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JUNE 25 CHARGE BRIEFED EBAN ON AGREEMENT ON PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR MAKING POINTS IN STATE 122213. EBAN ASKED IF AGREEMENT MEANT THAT US WOULD BE WILLING TO CONCLUDE SIMILAR AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS CHINA. CHARGE REPLIED THIS COMMITMENT OF EACH PARTY TOWARDS THIRD PARTIES WAS ALREADY EXPLICIT AND THIS IS ONE OF MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF AGREEMENT.

2. EBAN COMMENTED THAT ON BASIS OF DINITZ MEETING WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY, PICTURE MERGES FROM SUMMIT OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN US AND USSR TO DISAGREE ON MIDDLE EAST WITH SOVIET UNION APPEARING LESS FEROCIOUS THAN IN PAST. EBAN SAID, HOWEVER, THAT SUMMIT DID NOT LEAD TO OPTIMISTIC CONCLUSIONS ABOUT SOVIET ROLE IN MIDDLE EAST IN SUPPORT OF RESOLVING CONFLICT. BOTH SIDES APPEARED REALISTIC IN THEIR RECOGNITION OF OBLIGATIONS EACH HAS TO ITS FRIENDS AND NEITHER SIDE IS PREPARED TO DO WHAT OTHER WANTS. FONMIN, THEREFORE, CONCLUDED THAT DISCUSSIONS OF MIDDLE EAST AT SUMMIT HAD ESSENTIALLY WOUND UP ON SAME NOTE AS PREVIOUS SUMMIT IN MAY 1972.

3. EBAN TURNED TO QUESTION OF RECENT ARAB FEELERS ON NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID THAT BOURGUIBA HAD CHOSEN STRANGE PLACE, A MAGAZINE INTERVIEW, TO LAUNCH HIS FEELER. ISRAEL HAD REPLIED POSITIVELY TO BOURGUIBA AND HAD ASKED ITALIANS TO DRAW HIS ATTENTION TO THIS RESPONSE. FONMIN SAID THAT ISRAEL HAD TAKEN NOTE OF BOURGUIBA'S POSITION ON 1947 PARTITION PLAN BUT DID NOT CONSIDER TUNISIAN POSITION AS REASON FOR NOT MEETING. QUITE THE CONTRARY, IT IS PRECISELY BECAUSE OF DISAGREEMENT OVER POSITIONS THAT NEGOTIATIONS ARE NECESSARY. FONMIN SAID HE FELT BOURGUIBA HAD BACKTRACKED SOMEWHAT FROM IDEA OF MEETING IN HIS SPEECH TO ILO. HOWEVER, EBAN WAS ENCOURAGED BY BOURGUIBA'S PLAGIARISM FROM SECRETARY ROGERS IN COMMENTING ON INTERNATIONAL TREND TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS

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AND PHILOSOPHY OF DIALOGUE.

4. FONMIN SAID ITALIANS HAD NOT REPORTED ANY SPECIFIC TUNISIAN REACTION TO ISRAEL'S AGREEMENT FOR MEETING, BUT ADDED THAT ITALIANS HAD NOTED BOURGUIBA'S DIMINISHED STATUS AT HOME AND IN ARAB WORLD. FONMIN COMMENTED THAT IT IS NOT SAME BOURGUIBA WHO WAS ONCE FIRMLY IN CHARGE OF TUNISIA.

5. EBAN SAID THAT GOI HAD FAVORABLE INTERPRETED REPORTED TUNISIAN DESIRE FOR LOWER LEVEL AND PREPARATORY CONTACTS AS POSSIBLE INDICATION OF BOURGUIBA' S SERIOUSNESS AND THIS IS WHY EBAN HAD CALLED ON TUNISIANS TO MAKE DIPLOMATIC CONTACT ANYWHERE IN WORLD.

6. AT THIS POINT, EBAN ADDED, ISRAEL IS CONCERNED WITH ITS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL IMAGE IN HANDLING BOURGUIBA' S CALL FOR NEGOTIATIONS. BUT THIS IS NOT TO SAY THERE IS ANY DOUBT OR HESITANCY ABOUT ISRAEL' S WILLINGNESS FOR A MEETING. FONMIN SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER EXERCISE WOULD IN FACT LEAD TO A MEETING. HE COMMENTED THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR THE US TO EXPRESS ITS INTEREST AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR A MEETING WHILE SPEAKING TO TUNISIANS AND PROBE LATTER' S REACTION TO FAVORABLE ISRAELI RESPONSE.

7. CHARGE ASKED IF FONMIN WAS REQUESTING US APPROACH TO TUNISIANS ON QUESTION OF MEETING OR SIMPLY OFFERING NO OBJECTIONS IF US DISPOSED TO MOVE ON ITS OWN. FONMIN REPLIED HE WAS NOT MAKING A REQUEST SINCE HE DOES NOT KNOW PRECISELY WHAT US POSITION IS IN TUNISIA AND WHAT IMPACT OF SUCH A REQUEST WOULD BE. BUT FONMIN FELT IT WOULD BE NATURAL FOR US IN ITS NORMAL CONTACTS WITH TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR TO EXPRESS ITS INTEREST. AND IN VIEW OF US ROLE IN MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS IT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED UNNATURAL FOR US NOT TO DO SO.

8. AS FOR EGYPTIAN TALK OF NEGOTIATIONS, FONMIN SAID THAT ZAYYAT IS FEELING FRUSTRATED WITH UNSC MEETING. MEETING WAS LOW KEY AND DID NOT ATTRACT HEADLINES IN US PRESS. MEANWHILE, EGYPTIANS WERE BEING PRESSED FOR NEGOTIATIONS FROM MANY QUARTERS INCLUDING AUSTRIANS AND IRANIANS. IN A SENSE ISRAEL HAD STOLEN ZAYYAT' S POCKETBOOK. THIS HAD LET TO ZAYYAT STATEMENT IN COPENHAGEN ABOUT HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH FONMIN EBAN IN PRESENCE OF JARRING. FONMIN SAID ISRAEL HAS NO PROBLEM WITH SUCH A MEETING; HOWEVER,
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ZAYYAT HAD ADDED CONDITIONS WHICH MADE HIS OFFER PURE LIP SERVICE TO NEGOTIATIONS. ZAYYAT FULLY AWARE THAT ISRAEL CANNOT ACCEPT PRECONDITION OF AGREEING TO 1947 PARTITION PLAN. IT IS SIMPLY MORE ELEGANT FOR ZAYYAT TO SAY HE WANTS NEGOTIATIONS WHILE ADDING IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 (ADP) W

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R 271437 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8896

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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9. FONMIN SAID WE MUST BE AWARE THERE HAS BEEN A REGRESSION IN ARAB POSITION. WITH BOURGUIBA AND ZAYYAT SPEAKING OF 1947 PARTITION PLAN IT APPEARS THAT THERE IS A COORDINATED ARAB EFFORT IN PROCESS WHICH EXCLUDES JORDAN. WHEREAS SADAT HAD ONCE TALKED OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO 1967 LINES ARABS HAVE NOW DIVIDED MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM INTO TWO ASPECTS. THE FIRST IS A QUESTION OF ACHIEVING PRE-1967 LINES. BUT THIS, THEY CLAIM, WOULD NOT RESOLVE PROBLEMS OF 1947. EVEN IF THERE WERE AGREEMENT ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, PROBLEM OF PALESTINIANS AND OF IMPLEMENTING 1947 PARTITION PLAN WOULD REMAIN ACCORDING TO ARABS. THUS, WHILE ISRAEL HAS CONTINUED SAYING THERE MUST BE CHANGES IN 1967 LINES, EGYPT HAS REGRESSED TO DEMANDING 1947 PARTITION PLAN. THIS COULD BE NEGOTIATING POSITION ON PART OF ARABS, BUT EVEN SO GAP BETWEEN SIDES HAS WIDENED.

11. CHARGE COMMENTED THAT ISRAELI STRATEGY HAS BEEN TO BLOCK OTHER EGYPTIAN OPTIONS TO POINT THAT THEY MUST NEGOTIATE AND ASKED IF THERE IS NOT DANGER OF MISSING OPPORTUNITY BY NOT RECOGNIZING WHEN EGYPTIANS ARE PREPARED FOR NEGOTIATIONS. FONMIN REPLIED

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THAT EGYPTIANS AND ARABS WILL NOT SIGNAL INTEREST THROUGH NEWS-PAPERS BUT WILL WHISPER IN SOMEONE'S EAR. IN THIS REGARD FONMIN FELT CHANCELLOR BRANDT'S EXPERIENCE IN EUROPE WAS RELEVANT THOUGH OF COURSE NOT IDENTICAL SINCE IN EUROPE OBJECTIVE WAS

SANCTION OF EXISTING BORDERS.

12. FONMIN POINTED OUT THAT SADAT HAS RECEIVED NO ENCOURAGEMENT FROM SOVIETS WHO HAVE INDICATE THEY WILL NOT ALLOW MIDDLE EAST TO STAND IN WAY OF RAPPROACHMENT WITH WEST. HE ADDED THAT CHANCES ARE SADAT WILL FIND CONTINUED UNSC DEBATE NO MORE PRODUCTIVE THAN SUMMIT. ISRAEL IS TRYING TO SUGGEST IN EUROPEAN CAPITALS THAT THIS IS DESIRABLE OUTCOME AND THAT EUROPEANS WOULD DO WELL NOT TO BE SO CLEVER IN COMING UP WITH FORMULAS TO GIVE SADAT AN OUT.

13. FONMIN SAID THAT UNSYG WANTS TO COME TO MIDDLE EAST AND HAD APPROACHED ISRAEL WITH PROPOSAL FOR VISIT. ISRAEL IS INCLINED TO LOOK FAVORABLY ON VISIT PROVIDED SYG COMES IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY AND NOT AS RESULT OF OR BOUND BY ANY UN RESOLUTION. FONMIN SAID HE FELT THIS MIGHT BE ONE WAY OF LETTING EGYPT OFF HOOK SO THAT CONTINUED UNSC DEBATE COULD BE INDEFINITELY POSTPONED OR CURTAILED TO AWAIT RESULTS OF SYG'S VISIT. ISRAEL IS THINKING OF SYG VISIT FOR END OF JULY OR EARLY AUGUST.

14. IN ANY EVENT, FONMIN SAID, ISRAEL WOULD OPPOSE ATTEMPTS TO HOLD CONTINUED UNSC DEBATE IN GENEVA. ISRAEL WAS NOT IN FAVOR OF DEBATE IN FIRST PLACE AND CERTAINLY DID NOT WANT TO PAY ADDITIONAL SUMS IT WOULD COST TO SET UP OPERATION IN GENEVA. FONMIN SAID THAT EXPERIENCE OF UNSC MEETING IN PANAMA WAS NOT GOOD AND THAT UK AND FRANCE DID NOT SUPPORT MOVE TO GENEVA. EBAN CONCLUDED THAT IF DEBATE CONTINUES, ARABS WILL TRY TO REINTERPRET UNSC RESOLUTION 242. ISRAEL HAS AGREED TO ORIGINAL RESOLUTION AND NOT SOME ARAB INTERPRETATION. EVEN CHANGE IN EMPHASIS BETWEEN ELEMENTS OF 242 WOULD BE SEEN BY ISRAEL AS DESTROYING ESSENTIAL BALANCE AND NEGATE ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE OF ORIGINAL RESOLUTION.

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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